

Humboldt State University  
Department of Social Work  
Baccalaureate Social Work Program

# Social Agency Experience

## SW 355

Spring 2008  
Tuesdays or Thursdays  
3:30pm-4:50pm  
Siemens Hall 110

Instructor: Ronnie Swartz  
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Email: swartz@humboldt.edu

Office Hours:  
Tuesdays, 12:00pm-2:00pm  
Thursdays, 12:00pm-2:00pm  
*and by appointment*

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### Course Description

This course provides an exposure to human service agency settings and processes. The seminar focuses on the organizational context for social work in relation to service delivery, working with colleagues, collaboration with other agencies, and the influence of policy. Two units: four hours/week (60 hours total) of volunteer work and 60-80 minutes/week in seminar. *Graded Credit/No Credit.*

### Course Learning Outcomes

*After completing this course, students will be able to:*

1. Identify the services/programs provided within a social service or community service-oriented agency or program.
2. Share knowledge about the social issues addressed by their agency/program.
3. Respect and appreciate diversity in relation to race, ethnicity, color, culture, age, class, income, spirituality, religion, ability, family structure, nationality, first language, sexual orientation, sexuality, gender identity, and legal unions.
4. Describe agency policies and procedures on confidentiality, release of information, and informed consent.
5. Illustrate how workers in the agency develop helping relationships that emphasize client strengths and build on environmental resources.
6. Use guidance provided by staff to carry out tasks typical of social work in the agency setting.
7. Analyze the degree to which social work values and ethics influence agency work.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of decision making processes, policies, structures, and procedures of social service agencies and community organizations.
9. Skillfully utilize systematic reviews of professional literature and research applicable to agency work to assist in social service delivery.
10. Engage in seminar discussions that result in an expanding understanding of self and growing professional development.

**Activities and Expectations**

*Credit for this course is earned by completing 2 written activities, demonstrating class engagement, performing 60 hours of agency experience, and receiving a favorable evaluation from an agency supervisor.*

**Paper #1**

Identify someone who wishes the most for you, who looks upon you with favor, someone who inspires you to do good things and is inspired by your success. Write this person a letter that reflects on what you hope to achieve this semester in your social agency experience and why this is significant to you.

This paper should be *about 2 pages*. **Due February 26/28.**

**Paper #2**

Write a letter to the person you identified in Paper #1 that lets them know how you have done them proud.

This paper should be *about 2 pages*. **Due May 6/8.**

**Engagement**

This refers to how present you are during the time we spend together. It relates to attendance and punctuality, certainly, but even more it requires your critical reflection on the material, mindfulness of your own life experiences in relation to the life experiences of your comrades, your willingness to speak when it might be uncomfortable to do so, and the presence of mind to remain silent when it might allow for the creation of new possibilities for someone else.

**Learning objectives**

When you have a sense for the opportunities that are available to you, please submit a list of 3 things you are interested in getting out of your social agency experience, how you will get those things out of your experience, and how you will know you have gotten those things out of your experience. You will refer to these learning objectives throughout the course and use these in the final evaluation of your experience. *You will also need to establish a regular volunteer schedule.* **Due February 12/14.**

**Final evaluation**

You and your agency supervisor will complete an evaluative questionnaire at the end of the semester or at the conclusion of sixty (60) hours of service. It will include an assessment of previously identified learning objectives. **Due May 6/8.**

I prefer to have all written activities be *single-spaced*, with standard 12 point Times New Roman font, and standard margins (1" top and bottom, 1¼" left and right). This format saves paper and is easy for me to read. If you can do this, great. If not, so be it, but *account for this when you write your paper*. In the end, please concern yourself more with content than length... a little bit shorter or a little bit longer is just fine if that's what it takes to convey your thoughts. Written activities can be emailed to me as attachments at [swartz@humboldt.edu](mailto:swartz@humboldt.edu) if you'd like. Unless you make alternate arrangements with me I will consider the lateness of your activity in generating the number of "units" you will receive for the activity. Late activities make things difficult for me as I have budgeted my time to address student work according to a specific schedule. I

cannot, therefore, guarantee that a late paper will be reviewed with enough time for you to make revisions.

When you make reference in written documents to any ideas or “facts” that are not your own or “common knowledge” you’ve got to—I mean really got to—cite your sources. If you are not familiar with generally accepted approaches to citing sources, you can find some guidelines by searching the internet for “APA Citation Guidelines.”

*Please contact me as soon as you can to let me know if there are disability-related issues that may come up in the course of this class that I can accommodate. The HSU Student Disability Resource Center can be reached at (707)826-4678.*

### **HSU Policies**

You are expected to adhere to all of Humboldt State University’s Policies, especially:

- Academic Honesty
- Nondiscrimination Policy
- Rights and Responsibilities for a Campus Community

These can be located at the beginning of your course catalog.

| <b><u>Week</u></b>    | <b><u>Notes</u></b>                          |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>January 22/24</b>  |  |
| <b>January 29/31</b>  |  |
| <b>February 5/7</b>   |  |
| <b>February 12/14</b> | <b>Learning Objectives Due</b>               |
| <b>February 19/21</b> |  |
| <b>February 26/28</b> | <b>Paper #1 Due</b>                          |
| <b>March 4/6</b>      | <b>No Class: Ronnie will be out of town.</b> |
| <b>March 11/13</b>    |  |
| <b>March 18/20</b>    | <b>No Class: Spring Break</b>                |
| <b>March 25/27</b>    |  |
| <b>April 1/3</b>      |  |
| <b>April 8/10</b>     |  |
| <b>April 15/17</b>    |  |
| <b>April 22/24</b>    |  |
| <b>April 28/May 1</b> |  |
| <b>May 6/8</b>        | <b>Paper #2 and Final Evaluation Due</b>     |